

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

**KINGSTON PARK PLEASURE GARDENS**

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**KINGSTON PARK PLEASURE GARDENS**

Name: KINGSTON PARK PLEASURE GARDENS

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Rushcliffe (District Authority)

Parish: Kingston on Soar

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.845680  
Longitude: -1.2489211  
National Grid Reference: SK 50683 27839  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1001716  
Date first listed: 13-Jan-2011

## Details

Pleasure gardens and parkland of 1840-44 associated with Kingston Hall, designed by Edward Blore to complement the Hall of 1842-45.

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT** In 1796 William Strutt, the son of the industrialist Jedediah Strutt, and his father-in-law Thomas Evans jointly bought the 1,300 acre Kingston Estate with its 12 acres of woodland from the Duke of Leeds, and in 1828 Strutt bought out Evans's share from his descendants. In 1830 the estate accordingly passed to Edward Strutt MP, later the 1st Baron Belper (from 1856), who in the next decade created the woodlands at Station Plantation, Moor Wood and The Belt, and in 1840 he commissioned Edward Blore to build Kingston Hall on Great Hill Field. The house was begun in 1842 and completed by 1845. There was a village at Kingston on Soar, but the provision of semi-detached cottages to Blore's designs turned it into a more conventional estate village, and the architect also laid out the gardens around the house and the wider parkland beyond. Various lodges were provided in addition to the stables and the pavilion, some of which are listed; the Hall is listed at Grade II. The pleasure gardens around the house were laid out in 1840-44, designed by Blore, and during the earthworks a C6 Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered; the removable remains are now in Nottinghamshire University Museum. To the south of the house, hedges and field boundaries were removed down to Kingston brook and the area planted with trees to form open parkland. To the south-east, a nine acre lake with two islands was created, fed by the brook rerouted for that purpose. A large kitchen garden was laid out to the south-east of the house. To the north of the Hall, the land was created into open parkland and enclosed by park rails. In the pleasure grounds during the 1890s a tetrastyle Ionic Greek temple was built at the top of a flight of marble steps, overlooking a pond, using imported antique columns and statues. The 4th Lord Belper sold the Hall in 1976 and the Greek temple was sold for scrap, leaving only the box hedges either side of the site of the staircase. The Hall was converted to twelve apartments in 1980, and other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Hall were sold off for separate occupation, which has resulted in multiple ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, SETTING, LANDFORM, BOUNDARIES, AND AREA** Kingston-on-Soar is situated at the extreme south-west corner of Nottinghamshire, along the eastern side of the lower reach of the River Soar, close to its confluence with the Trent,

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and this broad sweep of alluvial land forms part of the natural floodplain of the river. The level ground is interrupted by outcrops of Mercia Mudstone, which exist as low hills rising up to ten metres above the floodplain. Kingston Hall, the principal building, is located on the top of one of the hills, commanding views to the south, west and east.

To the west, adjacent to Gotham Road, a stone wall marks the park's boundary. To the south, the registered area is defined by Kingston Brook which feeds 'The Pool'. The boundary takes in the wooded area to the south and east of the lake, then follows the drive to the north of the kitchen garden to the rear of the hall. The registered area boundary encloses the hall to the east and north, including the planting to the rear of the Gotham Road lodge where it joins the enclosing wall.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal entrance from the Gotham Road has stone gate piers flanked by a lodge (Grade II), marking the drive which skirts around the north side of the arboretum to the Hall's entrance. The drive is marked on either side by widely-spaced specimen trees allowing long views to the north-east. Not included in the registered area is the secondary entrance to the west which leads to the former home farm and comprises cast-iron gates hung on stone piers and is marked by a brick lodge (known as Evan's Lodge).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Kingston Hall (listed Grade II) was designed by Edward Blore for Edward Strutt, later created Lord Belper. The Hall is constructed of rock-faced ashlar with ashlar dressings and has several irregularly spaced stacks with tall shafts. Designed in the Tudor style, it has stone mullion windows and hood moulds. The interior has Alabaster details and Elizabethan style decorative plasterwork. The Hall was subdivided into apartments in the 1980s.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** In the immediate vicinity of Kingston Hall are the pleasure gardens. To the south-west of the main elevation of the Hall are the former terraced gardens with parterres. The terraces are constructed from coursed dressed stones, topped with ashlar copings which terminate in square stone piers. Flights of steps lead from the path adjacent to the Hall and from the side walls down to the gardens which are under grass. A line of conifers divides the upper terrace. To the west, the base of a polygonal planter and a smaller, circular planter of later date remain. To the east of the terrace is the Pavilion (Grade II) a domed garden building with views over the parkland to the east of the Hall. To the west and north-west of the hall is the arboretum, densely planted with specimen trees such as spruce, Douglas Fir, Turkish Oak, Beech, sycamore and Lebanese Cedar, and criss-crossed with paths. The ground falls sharply towards the south-west and it was here that the Greek Temple was built in the 1890s; the line of shrubs which flanked the steps remains.

**PARK** A stone wall marks the boundary between the terraces and the parkland to the south-west, adjoined to the west and east by cast iron railings. Leading through the iron railing near to the west end, a gate leads into the paddock, a small roughly triangular-shaped piece of land which extends 80m into the park from Gotham Road and is bounded by the estate railings on the south. At the far south-west corner is the former village school built by Lady Belper (built in 1848, closed in 1966). The paddock has individual specimen trees and combined with the rest of the pleasure grounds covers an area of about 4.8 Ha. To the south-west of the Hall and east of the paddock, lies an area of gently sloping parkland with individual specimens and clumps of trees. At the southern boundary is the brook which feeds 'The Pool', primarily a fish pond for the estate which also functioned as a boating lake, with elementary water control systems including a weir. 'The Pool' retains the original configuration and the two islands within it. To the north of The Pool is the walled kitchen garden, now laid to grass, which no longer retains any glasshouses. The drive to the north of the garden leads to the rear of the Hall.

**SOURCES** Hadfield, M, *The English Landscape Garden* (1988) Pevsner, N and Williamson, E, *Buildings of England: Nottinghamshire* (2nd ed 1979), 155-6 Smith, B, *A History of Kingston-on-Soar up to the 19th Century* (1988) Smith, B, *Kingston-on-Soar: Further Chapters in the History of an Estate Village* (1990) Smith, B & S, *Perspectives of Kingston-on-Soar* (2002) [http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/countryside/nature\\_conservation/countrysideappraisal/countrysideappraisal-chaptereight.htm](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/countryside/nature_conservation/countrysideappraisal/countrysideappraisal-chaptereight.htm) (accessed on 18 March 2010) Port, M H, 'Blore, Edward (1787-1879)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004); online ed., Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2679>, accessed 22 June 2010]

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION** The 1840s pleasure gardens and parkland associated with Kingston Hall, Kingston-on-Soar, Nottinghamshire are designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* Intactness: The pleasure gardens are substantially intact and the parkland to the south of the Hall retains its historical configuration. \* Designer: Edward Blore is an architect of national renown. Kingston Park is an unusual example of his holistic design ethos applied to the principal and

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ancillary buildings, landscape and wider estate, which adds considerable historic interest, amplified by its association with Lord Belper. \* Group Value: The registered area is integral to the layout of the estate generally and has strong group value with, and contributes to the setting of, the Hall, Stables, Pavilion and Gotham Road Lodge, all listed at Grade II.

## Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.